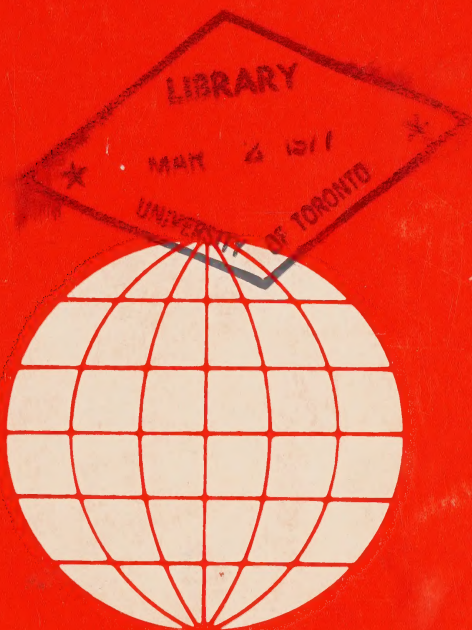


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# Canada and the Commonwealth



External Affairs  
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*Presenting*

Canada  
and the  
Commonwealth

*a booklet featuring*

One Riddle,  
Seven Sceptical Questions,  
Seven Incisive Answers,

*an assortment of other*

Varied and Fascinating Information,  
*and, of course,*  
a Cast of Millions

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**Riddle:** What is black and brown and yellow and white, and yet is colour-blind, has 36 members, is a body that organizes but is not an organization, has no regulations and yet is regulated, and is alive and well and living in London, Ottawa, and a host of other places?

**Answer:** Would you believe the Commonwealth?

**Question:** What *is* the Commonwealth, anyway? I thought it was a private club for retired British diplomats.

**Answer:** The Commonwealth, like a number of other important things in this world, is not easily defined. The best description was given by heads of government in their 1971 Declaration: "The Commonwealth of Nations is a voluntary association of independent sovereign states, each responsible for its own policies, consulting and co-operating in the common interests of their peoples and in the promotion of international understanding and world peace."

It is clear from this that the Commonwealth is not some kind of exclusive Anglo-Saxon Empire Club. Some people have seen the Commonwealth as an association of the leaders of successful movements for national liberation; others consider it the product of a friendly devolution of authority within the British Empire. Whatever their opinion on these matters of origin, all members are united in the belief that the real meaning of the Commonwealth association lies in its activity and not its definition.

**Question:** Why is Canada a member of the Commonwealth?

**Answer:** Canada is a member because it never joined — that is, it was a founding member. It evolved along with the Commonwealth and acted as a catalyst for the association's growth. With the formation of the Dominion of Canada in 1867, the first self-governing state in the British Empire was formed and a basis for the modern Commonwealth was created. Since that date, as more and more British colonies have achieved full nationhood, the great majority of them have chosen to remain linked through the Commonwealth association.

**Question:** What does Canada do in the Commonwealth, if anything?

**Answer:** Canada does everything in the Commonwealth. It participates in all aspects of the Commonwealth programs of consultation and functional co-operation, from the lofty Heads of Government Meeting to the more terrestrial concerns of the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux.

**Question:** What does Canada get out of it?

**Answer:** A lot. Canada benefits from the Commonwealth-fostered exchange of expert opinion on subjects ranging from government administration to plant pathology, and the programs of functional co-operation that the Commonwealth sponsors in these areas. In making a contribution to the improvement of international understanding and the resolution of world problems, Canada recognizes that the Commonwealth is a significant force in the promotion of peace and security among nations and the creation of a stable global environment.

**Question:** Why didn't I know about all this earlier?

**Answer:** The Commonwealth association has been a family affair and families do not usually broadcast, with great fanfare, their meetings and activities. In addition, the Common-

wealth-sponsored programs have been generally in specialized areas of functional co-operation that you may not be aware of unless you are a legal draftsman, an educational administrator or a plant pathologist. The Commonwealth has, however, recognized the need to educate the general public as to its modern nature and activities and to broaden its public image. It will give increased attention to public relations in the future.

**Question:** What are you doing to spread the good word in Canada about this Commonwealth?

**Answer:** We are distributing information on the Commonwealth specially designed to arouse the interest of students and others and of associations. We are arranging for speeches and helping to organize conferences. Last but not least, we are issuing this booklet. The Commonwealth is not interested in getting a name for itself by producing a lot of glossy brochures. Instead, the Commonwealth adopts a much more venerable advertising motto: "By their fruits ye shall know them".



*Queen Elizabeth, arriving in Canada prior to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, is greeted by the then Governor-General and Mrs. Michener and Prime Minister and Mrs. Trudeau.*



## Canada and the Commonwealth Association:

*or everything you wanted to know about  
the Commonwealth (but didn't think of asking)*

Canada played a more fundamental role in the emergence of the Commonwealth than did even the mother country, Britain. It was the Canadian insistence on achieving independent status within the British Empire that provided the first focus round which the future Commonwealth association could crystallize. Canada was searching for a form of association that would allow it the full independence befitting a mature and sovereign state, while retaining the traditional connection with Britain and its Empire.

The Commonwealth proved to be the answer to this problem. The British Empire evolved into the British Commonwealth and, finally, into the Commonwealth of Nations (or just "the Commonwealth"). Throughout these changes, member countries, whether a monarchy such as New Zealand or a republic like India, agreed that the Queen should be the symbol and head of the Commonwealth. This was reaffirmed by the decision of Heads of Government that their 1977 meeting, which in the normal course of events would have rotated to some other capital, should be held in London when the Queen celebrated the Jubilee of her accession as head of the Commonwealth.

The development of the Commonwealth has been in a direction that is complementary to Canadian interests and attitudes — it is a family association in which we can feel at home. The Commonwealth's frankness, its informality, its freedom from super-power hegemony, its concern with practical co-operation, its diversity and its directness, are all aspects that reflect Canadian desires and approaches. As Prime Minister Trudeau expressed it in his opening address to the 1973 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting:

Within the Commonwealth we have the opportunity and the means for both communication and understanding. In this forum of discussion, all Commonwealth members are equal. None is senior; none is superior. None is distinguished by economic self-sufficiency; none is possessed of all political virtue. In our discussions during the next

few days, I have no doubt that we shall be able to demonstrate to one another and to the world the advantages of our dissimilarity, the richness of our diversity, the excitement of our variety. We shall be able to do so because we are members of an association, not an institution. In this Commonwealth there is no structure to contain us; there are no fetters to chafe us. The Commonwealth is a reflection of its 32 members and of their desire to consult and co-operate with one another. There is no artificial adhesive. Nor is there any voting, any constitution, any flag, any headquarters. This association is neither regional in nature nor specialized in its interests. The Commonwealth is an organism, and this fact guarantees both its vitality and its flexibility.

The non-formalized, organic nature of the Commonwealth is a feature with which Canada particularly sympathizes. The foundations of our political community do not rest on a comprehensive constitution or a structure of iron-clad statutes, but rather are rooted in the organic mixture of shared values, common traditions and unwritten understandings that have provided the soil from which our policy has grown. This heritage of shared beliefs provides a unity of purpose to the Commonwealth and has found expression in the 1971 Declaration of Commonwealth Principles. In this declaration, Canada and fellow Commonwealth members displayed an impressive unanimity with regard to their attitudes on fundamental questions of human freedom and world peace and security. They regarded these principles as valid not merely for themselves but as a contribution to the collective understanding and goodwill of all mankind.

Canada is very happy with this outward-looking role of the Commonwealth and its endeavours to keep open the doors between the nations of the world that might otherwise remain closed and unused. In the view of Arnold Smith, a Canadian who served the Commonwealth eminently through ten years as its first Secretary-General:

Our task is to use the Commonwealth constructively as one of the available instruments of world politics, to help us all learn to share a planet. Helping humanity learn to share all the world has to offer, sensibly, justly, creatively, must become the overriding goal of responsible politics, and must become a habitual vision of all those who work in the macro-political field.

In an era when many people view with dismay and resignation the upsurge of political, economic and social conflicts that menace global harmony, the Commonwealth association continues to prove that a rela-

tionship of understanding and co-operation between peoples of the world is still possible — founded, as the Commonwealth is, on an attitude of equality, friendship and mutual self-respect. Canada's active support for the Commonwealth association is designed to ensure that this possibility does not disappear.



United Nations photo

*The Colombo Plan is an early example of a Commonwealth initiative that was expanded to operate in a wider context.*



## Canada-Commonwealth consultation and functional co-operation:

*or Cape Breton Island and Western Samoa  
are closer than you think*

Sentiment and nostalgia do not characterize the Commonwealth association. Rather, it is action-orientated, interested in providing tangible results for members, in concentrating on practical programs of mutual assistance that are of concrete value. Since 1950 and the initiation of the Colombo Plan, the Commonwealth has progressively expanded its concern for the economic and social development of its poorer members, and its activity in their interest.

Commonwealth programs of practical assistance have helped pave the way (sometimes literally) towards the achievements of independence by a number of countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the South Pacific. The Commonwealth has seen development assistance not as a "one-way street" that sets off the donor against the recipient but rather as a continuing partnership, in which all members contribute as best they can to the improvement of their respective societies. Even if you have no money to spare, you can help someone. So it is with Commonwealth assistance programs, where the developing countries make a financial contribution and so have a real stake in the programs' success, at home and also in fellow developing countries.

### Functional co-operation — a password

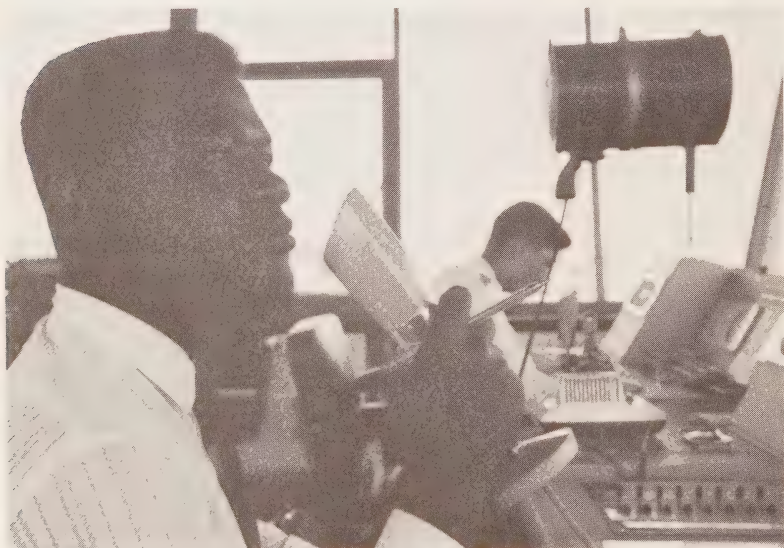
Canada likes the pragmatic approach adopted by the Commonwealth in the realm of functional co-operation, and is among its most active supporters. It puts its resources — money, technology and trained individuals — into this effort. For example, the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, the chief Commonwealth program of development assistance, received \$4 million from Canada towards its 1975/76 fiscal year, or approximately 35 per cent of its budget. The CFTC is completely multi-lateral and is supported by financial contributions from all Commonwealth member countries. It draws upon human and technical resources from any part of the Commonwealth to help meet the development requirements of

its members. It has made a point of encouraging mutual self-help among its developing members, with half of its experts on assignment to developing countries coming from other Third World countries themselves. The CFTC has quickly built up a reputation for speed of response, flexibility and 'quality. It also makes a point of accommodating the development requests of small nations, which are often unable to obtain the attention and assistance of the major international agencies. It is, finally, a most efficient development-assistance mechanism; its administrative overhead runs at about 12 per cent, compared to an average of 30 per cent or more for other multilateral aid agencies. Arnold Smith has said of the CFTC:

It shows what scope there is for down-to-earth, practical, mutual help in a group such as the Commonwealth. In my judgment, continued rapid expansion would make good sense, developmentally and in terms of basic political strategy. I have always believed that the health of the Commonwealth, and therefore its value to its members, depends on the extent to which it is constructively used.

*Canadian involvement in the Commonwealth  
Caribbean: training and facilities at Piarco  
International Airport in Trinidad.*

NFB photo





*"Bangladesh" head of government ready to intervene at model heads of government conference. These conferences, held annually in Ottawa, are sponsored by the Royal Commonwealth Society and the Department of External Affairs.*

### It's fun to be young

The Commonwealth Youth Program is another important area of functional co-operation. Established in 1973 after a meeting of Commonwealth ministers concerned with youth matters in Lusaka, Zambia, the program is designed to promote pan-Commonwealth action in dealing with the practical problems faced by youth. Seminars and research in key youth-problem areas such as unemployment, education, health, rural development and urban adjustment are going on all the time and three regional youth-development centres have been engaged in training programs for youth workers. The CYP has also administered a Commonwealth Youth Service Awards scheme that provides travel and cash awards to outstanding youth-organized projects in social and community development. One of the earliest winners was a community-action youth group from Victoria, British Columbia. Canada has actively supported this program (we contribute 30 per cent of the CYP's budget) as a prime example of inter-Commonwealth co-operation in an area of concern to both developed and developing countries.

The names of the divisions within the Commonwealth Secretariat reflect the broad sectors of its concern: Education, Youth, Law, Science, Health, Trade and Finance, Commodities, Food Production and Rural Development, Applied Studies in Government. The emphasis in these areas has evolved with the expression of the needs of the member countries. The Secretariat has responded to these requests in the direct, friendly and understanding fashion that is a feature of the Commonwealth relationship.

Commonwealth members like to talk to each other, and we do it often and everywhere. It's what we call widespread consultations and it's part of the functional co-operation we enjoy. With the benefit of a common language, and similar institutions and approaches, members communicate well, informally and on a regular basis. Commonwealth members find that it's easier to work things out with friends over a cup of coffee than in a classroom situation. They find that it's easier to meet freely, in confidence and without the rigid framework of, for instance, a UN meeting. As an eminent New Zealand educationalist once put it: "Commonwealth meetings begin where UNESCO meetings end."



## Canada and Commonwealth consultation:

*or a funny thing happened on the way  
to the Heads of Government Meeting*

There are two major meetings where members assemble informally, one for the heads of government and the other for senior officials. There is much ground to cover; political, social, economic issues are all raised. Happily, members speak to one another, not to the forum. A frank discussion, delegate to delegate, means a lot more than a full-blown speech whose dramatics outweigh its content.

The Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, recognized the value of this kind of meeting:

This is one forum where we can speak frankly and generate less rancour. We have the same backgrounds, use the same terms of reference. We inherited basic institutions and concepts of government in society. We understand each other better than any other group does. We use the same diction and concepts. It does not mean that we all stay put. We are all evolving and discovering our own personalities. We have all been brought up in similar institutions, with ideas and ideals which make it possible for us to speak with an informality and intimacy which is not possible elsewhere.

In a world where so many talk so much to achieve so little, this is heartwarming. Canada also likes the collegial and consensus approach to decisions of Commonwealth meetings on potentially divisive issues. When Prime Minister Trudeau greeted the delegates to the 1974 Commonwealth finance ministers' meeting in Ottawa, he reflected this attitude in his remarks:

In our view, there is simply no other association that permits men and women from virtually all parts of the world to gather so informally and so successfully to seek solutions to problems of common concern. In the Commonwealth, we employ our energies in attacking problems, not in attacking one another.

The same spirit and approach is evident at Commonwealth meetings of a more specialized nature. Economic matters have been discussed at the



CIDA photo

*Technical assistance: Canada built this cane-separation plant at the Uplands Sugar Mill, Barbados.*

annual Commonwealth finance ministers' meeting the week before the World Bank and International Monetary Fund meetings and in Commonwealth consultations at the GATT multilateral trade negotiations and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. A new Commonwealth initiative in this area was the meeting in London, in March 1975, of ministers concerned with rural development and food production, following on the 1974 World Food Conference. A complementary initiative was the establishment by the 1975 Heads of Government meeting of a Commonwealth group of experts to draw up for consideration by Commonwealth governments a comprehensive and interrelated program of practical measures directed at closing the gap between the rich and the poor countries. Chaired by Alister McIntyre, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Caribbean Community, the "Ten Wise Men" prepared two reports in 1975

*The Idikki power-dam, largest high-arch dam in Asia, was built in Kerala State, India, with the support of Canadian technical assistance and equipment.*

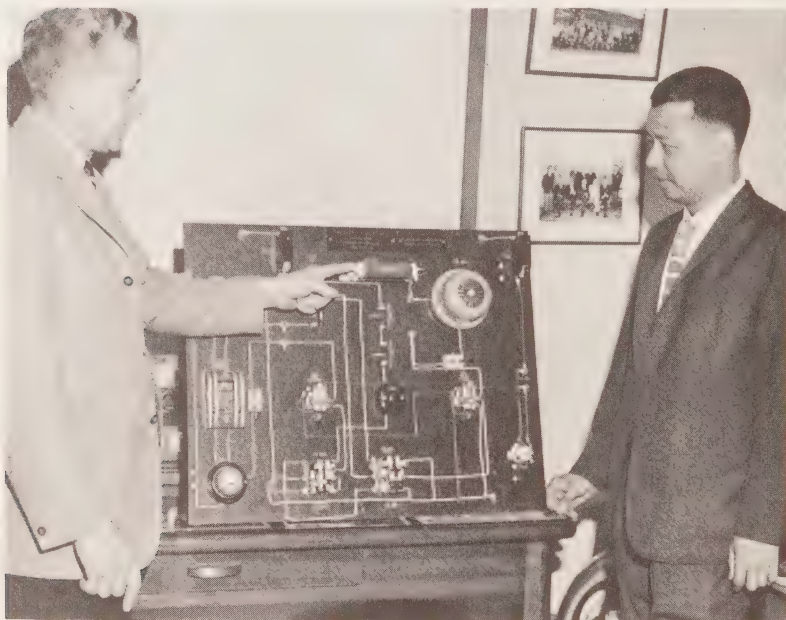
CIDA photo



and 1976, entitled *Towards a New International Economic Order*. They have been well received by the Commonwealth and the broader international bodies, such as the United Nations, to which they have been made available.

Even a long-distance runner would be breathless trying to keep up with the number of meetings called at any one time. In the fields of science and research, there are biennial meetings of the Commonwealth Science Council, meetings of the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux, the Commonwealth Advisory Aeronautical Research Council, the Commonwealth Metallurgical Conference and the Quinquennial Commonwealth Forestry Conference. In education, the triennial Commonwealth education conferences are a focus of attention, along with the regular meetings of the Commonwealth Education Liaison Committee. In 1975, two new Commonwealth educational

*Commonwealth co-operation means exchanges of knowledge and experience — a Singapore fireman visits the Dominion Fire Commissioner in Ottawa.*



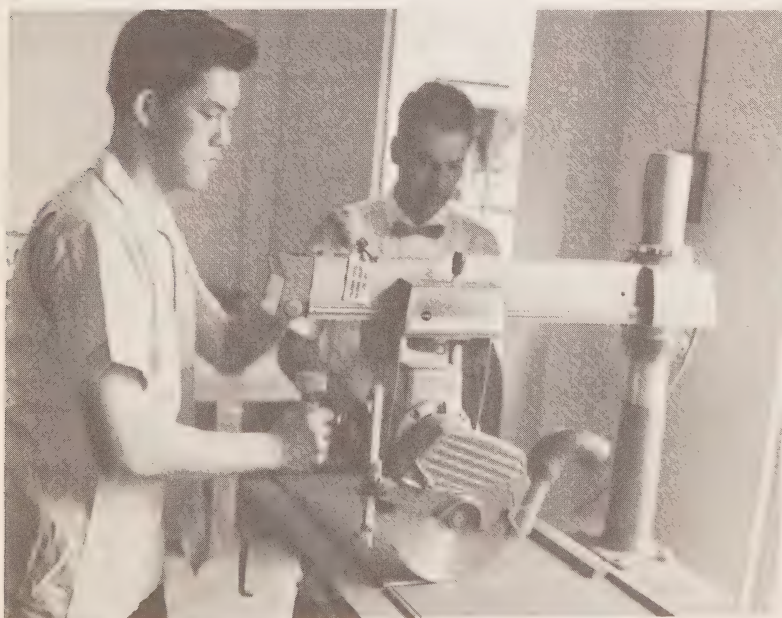


conferences were held — one, on educational broadcasting, in Australia, and the other, on materials for learning and teaching, in New Zealand.

Government consultations on health matters include the triennial Commonwealth Medical Conference, and the annual meeting of Commonwealth health ministers and senior administrators prior to the World Health Assembly meeting in Geneva. A meeting of Commonwealth law ministers takes place every two years; the 1977 one will be held in Winnipeg. With respect to communications and transportation, there are biennial meetings of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Council, one of which was held in Ottawa in the fall of 1975. Other specialized conferences range through the Commonwealth Auditors General Meeting, the Conference of Commonwealth Postal Administrators and the Commonwealth Defence Science Conference (to be held in Toronto in 1978) to the Commonwealth.

*Commonwealth co-operation:  
basic skills for practical applications.*

NFB photo



Youth Affairs Council, which has been meeting annually to consider the progress of the Commonwealth Youth Program and to discuss questions relating to the role and needs of youth in the Commonwealth in general.

Besides these regular government consultations, there are other meetings, seminars and workshops on specific topics of interest that involve Commonwealth member governments. Often an issue makes for strange bedfellows. The range and depth of these government consultations, the free give-and-take of ideas and information that characterizes them, and the tangible benefits that result from the implementation of their recommendations all attest to the importance of these Commonwealth meetings as a unique and refreshing example of international co-operation. Canada values these consultative meetings highly, not only as a means of strengthening the Commonwealth association but, and not incidentally, as a means of benefiting from the views and experiences of other countries facing similar problems they must solve from out of a common administrative tradition and structure. Problems relating to the social development of island communities, for example, are of interest to both Newfoundland and Mauritius. Providing health services to communities in remote areas is of as much concern to Canada as it is to Nigeria. An interest in questions of food production and rural development, of youth unemployment and drug use, of civil-aviation safety, is naturally common to all Commonwealth members.

In addition to all the activities already mentioned, Commonwealth governments consult each other on political matters. In the words of the present Commonwealth Secretary-General, Sonny Ramphal:

It is here that the Commonwealth facility for an ongoing exchange of views at all relevant levels of decision-making — but, more specially, its special facility for frank consultation at the level of the political leadership — can be a catalyst in the process of consensus formation. The uniqueness of this special facility which Commonwealth Heads of Government meetings provide should never be overlooked or minimized. It is the world's only opportunity for frank and intimate exchange of views between political leaders of the world's people, representative of almost every single element in the spectrum of international opinions and positions. Not only can Commonwealth leaders influence each other in their periodic face-to-face meetings, but they can greatly extend their collective influence through the regional groupings and organizations in which they separately play roles of great prominence. The Commonwealth is thus the very anti-

thesis of a bloc; but, in a world of blocs, its role in building those bridges that are necessary to the emergence of a planetary community can be of immense value and significance.

Canada fully appreciates the substantial contribution the Commonwealth can make to international peace and security, and has endorsed the idea of an "outward-looking" Commonwealth, one that would actively involve itself with international co-operation and offer, where appropriate, the good offices of the Commonwealth association in the resolution of world problems.

### "Spirit of Ottawa" not an apparition

In 1973, Canada was host to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, and Prime Minister Trudeau played a major role in reiterating the need for these consultations to remain frank and informal. This dedication to the upholding of the casualness and intimacy of the heads of government discussions against the temptation to polemicize or make speeches was taken up with renewed ardour by the participants. The subsequent consultations were carried out in a relaxed and straightforward manner that was referred to later as "The Spirit of Ottawa". This spirit preserves the unique and productive character of Commonwealth governmental consultations. As the Prime Minister remarked after the meeting:

We should not underestimate the immense benefits which flow from talking frankly to one another, understanding one another better, eliminating areas of prejudice and irritation, helping one another. These things the Commonwealth permits us to do as between governments, as between professional bodies, as between individuals. This is perhaps the greatest strength of the Commonwealth, this opportunity on a regular basis for men of goodwill to sit down together and discuss with one another the problems which affect them and the millions of people they represent. All the other advantages of the Commonwealth relationship — the exchange of people, the trade patterns, the economic assistance and co-operation schemes, the informality of diplomatic representation — these all assume their tone from the free and frank dialogue which takes place at the Heads of Government Meetings.

But are there real results from all this frank and forthright talk?

Yes.

The acid test of Commonwealth co-operation and consultation lies in its contribution to the betterment of the way of life of the peoples of the Commonwealth. Talk has to be translated rapidly into action for the im-

provement of the domestic conditions of member countries. The schemes and programs formulated at Commonwealth meetings have little to do with high politics or plans for national power and glory. Within the Commonwealth, the fundamental concerns are with the dignity of individual human beings and the improvement of the lot of ordinary men and women.

*Practical co-operation adapts technology to traditional agricultural methods.*

World Bank photo





## Canada and the unofficial Commonwealth:

*the people-to-people association*

Extensive Commonwealth governmental relations may lead one to think that this is the only form of interchange carried out in the Commonwealth. That this is not so is clearly indicated by the numerous contacts at the level of the unofficial Commonwealth. After all, the Commonwealth is made up of people and their mutual interaction is of the utmost importance. Over 200 non-governmental bodies form the "human" element of the Commonwealth association. Of the 50 Commonwealth conferences held in 1975, 23 were sponsored by non-governmental associations. Some of these were financed by the Commonwealth Foundation.

Commonwealth Heads of Government had recognized the need to promote voluntary association within the Commonwealth and thus, in 1965, they created the Commonwealth Foundation. The Foundation promotes interchanges between Commonwealth organizations in professional fields and assists, when required, in the setting-up of national institutions or associations in countries where these do not exist. All members of the Commonwealth contribute to the Foundation's budget, Canada being the largest contributor, assuming 32 per cent of the Foundation's costs. Like those of the Youth Program, the Foundation's operations are for the direct benefit of all member countries. Canada views the Foundation as filling an important gap other institutions and programs do not cover. The Foundation has helped to establish, and provides continuing support to, 18 Commonwealth professional associations, two of which have their headquarters in Canada. These associations represent architects and librarians, nurses and veterinarians, land surveyors and museum curators — in fact, they cross the whole spectrum of human endeavour from the study of micro-organisms to the study of Canadian literature.

One of the largest and most active associations is that of Commonwealth parliamentarians. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association brings together members of national and provincial legislatures from all parts of the Commonwealth for seminars and the annual Commonwealth



Public Archives of Canada photo

*How things have changed since this photograph was taken in 1897 at Hawarden Castle, the home of the Prime Minister of Great Britain, the Right Honourable William Ewart Gladstone! Attending the Colonial Conference held that year in London were (left to right): the Honourable Lewis H. Davies of Canada; the Right Honourable Wilfrid Laurier, Prime Minister of Canada; Mr. Gladstone; the Right Honourable George H. Reid, Premier of New South Wales; and the Right Honourable Richard J. Seddon, Premier of New Zealand.*

Parliamentary Conference (to be held in Ottawa in 1977). A former chairman of the executive committee of the Association is Premier Gerald Regan of Nova Scotia.

Other voluntary organizations interested in heightening awareness of the Commonwealth by the public include the National Council in Canada of the Royal Commonwealth Society and its eight branches, which arrange addresses and discussions on Commonwealth matters and bring the Commonwealth to the schools through an annual essay competition. A major project of the Royal Commonwealth Society has been the annual Student Commonwealth Conference organized by the Ottawa branch. These conferences bring together Canadian high-school students representing each of the Commonwealth countries in a series of lectures and simulations on a Commonwealth theme, concluding with a model Heads of Government meeting where the student delegates discuss agenda items on issues of current concern.

*President Nyerere making a point during the  
the Ottawa Heads of Government Meeting in 1973.*





NH&W photo

*Canadian athletes arrive in Scotland for the Commonwealth Games in 1970. The next games will be held in Edmonton in 1978.*

### A good sport: the Commonwealth

In the realm of sport, the quadrennial Commonwealth Games and the associated Paraplegic Games provide an opportunity for young athletes from throughout the Commonwealth to meet in friendly competition. The eleventh Commonwealth Games will be held in Edmonton, Alberta, from August 3 to 12, 1978, and will involve more than 50 teams from member countries, associated states and dependencies. In sports as in politics, the Commonwealth countries have no super-power. In both realms, its basic principle is the equality and mutual understanding of all its members. The Games have previously been held in Canada, in Hamilton and Vancouver.

Canada believes increased attention should, in the future, be paid to the unofficial Commonwealth as a means of creating those crucial human bonds between the peoples of member countries upon which the association's vitality depends. The modern Commonwealth has already established its importance and utility in the minds of the governments of its member countries. It is now time for the Commonwealth to make itself better known to its people.



# Canada and the future of the Commonwealth Association:

*we have a good thing going here*

Considering the state of the world at present, one is struck by the fact that there is a great deal of talk about the pressing need to establish an international community and global co-operation. Yet little real evidence of them is found.

The Commonwealth in many ways is a microcosm of the world at large, displaying the same diversity of peoples and conditions. This association, however, has made great strides in achieving a co-operation and sense of community that, talked about elsewhere, is mere rhetoric. The Commonwealth has, in the past, played a pathfinding role, and it will continue to act as an example and as a catalyst for the strengthening of international bonds throughout the world. The Commonwealth has quietly but consistently shown that peoples of different races, religions, colours and economic conditions can unite and work together for the common good. The Commonwealth has proved that an association based on the principles of equality, mutual respect and friendship, containing neither a super-power nor a subordinate power, is still possible in today's world. As Arnold Smith stated in his last report to governments:

In the current world situation it is vital that the Commonwealth use its network of relationships, its ease of communication, its mutual confidence and respect built up over so many years of intimacy. These are distinctive Commonwealth characteristics: the things that give our community its special place in the emerging pattern of international relationships. Our member countries are as different as can be; but they are linked together by ties at every human level, from heads of government to competing sportsmen to young people on exchange visits. Our ties are strong. They are the reasons why, amid the gloomy forebodings of a rebirth of the old divisive political and economic nationalisms, the Commonwealth still gives grounds for hope.

Canada fully believes in the constructive role that the Commonwealth plays and will continue to play in world affairs. The Commonwealth asso-

ciation also provides the perfect context in which to enrich and deepen our bilateral relations with its member countries.

### **Political reality**

Describing the nature and activities of the Commonwealth does not really explain the whole story of Canada's membership. We have found in the Commonwealth association a practical way of promoting international peace and security. These two ideas are, naturally, very important to us. The then Secretary of State for External Affairs, Allen J. MacEachen, put it this way to the Toronto Branch of the Royal Commonwealth Society in 1974:

For Canada, Commonwealth activity has a direct and distinct impact on three levels. Nationally, it satisfies the aims and aspirations of Canadians; it meets a very real need, whether conscious or unconscious, to find expression for a wider range of contacts; it provides satisfaction for an altruistic wish to do something about the problems of the world. Within the Commonwealth itself, it reinforces the association; it helps strengthen Commonwealth identity and character; it assists continuity of Commonwealth activities. Internationally, it reinforces the "thrust" of foreign policy generally, and helps us to do a job that must be done with Commonwealth colleagues. At all these levels, the association will continue to figure prominently in our calculations.

The future of the Commonwealth will lie not only in the survival of its association but in the growth of its ideals, rooted as they are in a sense of community and a commitment to co-operation. Canadians are dedicated to the flourishing of the Commonwealth in all its aspects, both for their own good and for that of their fellow men.

**Question:** Does this mean we shall continue to pay our dues to the Commonwealth association in the future?

**Answer:** Yes it does, but not in the sense one pays for one's membership in a union. Canada's association with the Commonwealth is more like one's relations with one's family. There are many good reasons one can think of for keeping up the association, but in the fundamental sense you know that it is something to which you simply belong. As families go, the Commonwealth is a very good one.

## The Commonwealth:

*Try it, you'll like it!*













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